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AN EXTENSION SUPERVISOR

LOOKS AT HIS JOB

What does he see?

What should he see?

How can he do more with what he sees?

The influence of a successful Extension supervisor can hardly be over-estimated. Every word, act, or suggestion is potent in proportion to the confidence and respect agents have for the supervisor. The skill with which the supervisor performs these duties goes far in determining the quality and scope of the work of all those who look to him for leadership. Therefore, anything the supervisor can do to improve himself is multiplied manyfold among farm people who look to the Extension Service for assistance.

A SUGGESTED LIST OF QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED AT CONFERENCES OF STATE AND FEDERAL SUPERVISORS

United States Department of Agriculture
Extension Service
Division of Field Coordination

The Extension Supervisor

has been described as

1. A director of field operations - keeping the extension organization functioning smoothly in the territory being supervised.
2. A planner - drawing upon, organizing and coordinating the resources of local people and of science to improve the agriculture of the territory.
3. A teacher - training extension agents in the best methods of working with people.
4. An appraiser - studying and evaluating both work and worker.
5. A leader - by example, assisting county extension agents to attain positions of responsibility and leadership in agriculture and home economics in their respective counties.

What are your objectives of supervision?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

NOTE: It is probable that not all the questions here raised can be answered or even discussed in a two-day conference. In that event, you may desire to keep this leaflet for future reference.

Selection of Agents

"An important factor to keep in mind is that more county extension agents fail because they do not know how to teach or work with people than because they do not know their subject matter."

1. What do you consider minimum qualifications for an agent at present?
2. What do you recognize as evidences of leadership in pre-college, college, and previous employment?
3. To what extent can men agents be replaced by women?
4. Ramsower found that superior agents possess vision, initiative, planning ability, resourcefulness, perseverance, faith and courage. If this agrees with your experience

How do you recognize and develop vision in agents?

What evidence of initiative will you accept?

How is planning ability demonstrated?

What qualities of perseverance do you prefer?

How do you detect faith?

What are symbols of courage?

5. What experiences, personal characteristics, or other conditions do you consider disqualifying?

6. How could you improve your present method of selecting agents?

7. What system of introducing the agent to the local group do you consider the most satisfactory?

8. How do you avoid carry-over into peace time of less qualified persons employed during war periods?

9. Can your answer to these questions be blended into a policy for selecting and placing agents?

Induction Training

1. When a new agent is employed, if he reports to the State office what orientation training should be given there?
2. How long should it take?
3. How is this best accomplished?
4. Who should be responsible for planning and directing this training?
5. What advantages can be expected from skillful orientation?
6. When the agent reports to the field, should more than one person be responsible for his on-the-job training? If so, what are the responsibilities of each?
7. What should a good training outline contain?
8. What factors should be considered in selecting the agents and county where the new appointees are trained?
9. How can progress of the new agent be best determined?
10. How should training Emergency War Food Assistants differ from training regular employees?

In-Service Training

1. How important is planned in-service training in the present situation?
2. How do you plan and conduct meetings so that they are examples to your agents?
3. How do you organize and plan county visits so they are of the most help to your agents?
4. How do specialists assist with in-service training?
5. Which Extension methods, or combination of methods do county agents need training in the present situation?
6. How are circular letters and other correspondence of the supervisor used in training agents?
7. How do you keep your agents up-to-date on new developments in extension methods?
8. Do your agents recognize you as an authority on extension methods?
9. What is the best way of getting constructive criticism to agents?

Pre-Induction Training

1. How important is this activity in the present situation?
2. A classroom course in Extension methods in the Junior year has been recommended. If you think this necessary, what should be the content?
3. Who should conduct this classroom course?
4. A summer internship of 3 months between the Junior and Senior year has been used. Is this practical in your organization?
5. Where could such prospective agents be placed?
6. What are the responsibilities of county Extension agents for this summer training?
7. What can you do to make the training most effective?
8. What should be the content of such training? What standards maintained?
9. What follow-up and evaluation should you make when the student returns for his Senior year?
10. How should supervisors contribute to pre-induction training?

Program Development

"A sound well-balanced rural program for every county"

1. How important is this topic at this time?
2. How do you analyze your counties to determine what kind of programs should be encouraged in each?
3. How and when do you assist county extension agents to present this information to local sponsoring groups so they will accept the responsibility for developing their own program?
4. What means do you use for screening and presenting to proper authorities agricultural problems from your counties that need research treatment?
5. How are the results of research used in program development?
6. How do you assist agents to use program planning as a means of developing and inspiring leaders?
7. How are practical farm and home experiences integrated with results of experimentation and research into a county action program?
8. What means do you recommend for getting all farm families and leaders in the county interested in carrying out the proposed program?
9. What criteria are used to select those features of the long-time program which should continue active?

10. What criteria do you use with agents as a basis for choosing activities which shall receive first attention?

Evaluation of County Programs

Someone has called the District Supervisor an arm of the Director. Is he not also ears and eyes?

1. What standards do you as a supervisor use in rating the programs in your counties?
2. What value do you place on accidents of weather and unusual opportunities when evaluating the success or failure of a particular program?
3. What is the place of specialists in evaluating county programs?
4. How do you determine the reaction of the public to county programs?
5. How do you find the reasons for the success or weakness of certain county programs?
6. When endeavoring to rate the effectiveness of an agent, what weight is given to work of a previous agent?

Program Organization at State Office

1. How can the development of the state program be an example and aid in construction and revision of county programs?
2. How can work of specialists and your work be coordinated for the best action program in the counties?
3. What help can the Extension editor give you in helping agents plan their information programs?
4. How can quick changes be made in State and District programs and not upset or disrupt necessary county programs?
5. What plan could be worked on a State basis so agents could visit other counties and hold cooperative clinics on programs in the county visited?
6. What can supervisors do at State or District level with other agencies to make work with rural programs in the county easier?

Managing the County Office

1. What steps are taken to analyze office methods to save time and energy?
2. What standards do you use for judging the management of a county office?
3. How well are these standards understood by the agents?

4. How do you help your agents recognize the value of business-like offices?
5. How do you train your agents to manage their offices?
6. How do you get office secretaries to feel a part of the Extension Service?
7. How are office secretaries trained?
8. How do you help your agents analyze their office job and get them to assign minor responsibilities to the office help where feasible?
9. What suggestion do you give on office arrangement, light, and appearance?
10. What have you done to make the whole county staff news conscious and show them how to find and write news stories?

Supervision

1. How do you help the agents keep up to date with the changing extension programs?
2. Do you sit down with your agents individually or in groups to plan district programs?
3. What methods are used in planning district programs?
4. Do your agents have opportunity to pour out their official and personal troubles to you? How effective are you as a listener?
5. What system do you use for canvassing your agents for suggestions for your work? How do you use and give credit for these suggestions?
6. How do you recognize misunderstandings and injustices, and correct them before they become sore spots?
7. How do you make it clear that you are on the side of your agents, ready to help and stand behind and support them?
8. How do you free yourself from the bondage of unimportant details?
9. How do you inspire and encourage your agents?
10. How do you develop your plans for county visits?
11. How do home demonstration, agricultural and 4-H supervisors coordinate their work in the county?
12. What methods do you use in measuring progress in supervision?
13. Do you keep a permanent record of supervisory help given each county?

The County Sponsoring Group

1. How does the county sponsoring group help extension work?
2. What are the functions of an effective county sponsoring group?
3. What are the basic principles of organization which contribute to the success of a county sponsoring group?
4. What are some of the causes of weakness in county sponsoring groups?
5. What are your relations to a county sponsoring group?
6. How do you guarantee that the leaders in the county groups get the credit they have earned for their services?
7. What is considered an adequate budget for a county?
8. What are the standards for the size of a staff for a county in your district?
9. What are the standards for travel for a county in your district?
10. What are the standards for equipment for a county in your district?

Policy

It is generally accepted that a knowledge of policy by personnel is necessary.

What do we mean by the word policy?

What are your responsibilities in regard to State policies?

How are policies developed in your State?

Are they published? If so, how?

How do you determine if policies are understood?

How do you detect deviations from policy before they become flagrant?

What do you do when you find deviations of this kind?

Is Federal policy well understood and adequate? Could it be re-vitalized and re-stated to be of greater help to you?

What are your suggestions?